

N
IV
P
16




N.W. P

16

38789/A

Sig c. watermarked 1809



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015

<https://archive.org/details/b22016892>

1/

(300)

59432
Past, Present, and to Come

THE

Prophecy at Large,

OF

ROBERT NIXON,

THE

CHESHIRE PROPHET;

From Lady COWPER's correct Copy in the Reign of Queen ANNE.

ALSO SOME

PARTICULARS OF HIS LIFE.

LIKEWISE

MOTHER SHIPTON'S

Wiltshire Prophecy,

WITH

THEIR EXPLANATIONS:

Lately discovered among other valuable MSS.

Preserved in the noble Family of the P—s's for many Years.

London:

Printed by W. GLINDON, Rupert-street, Hay-market.

Published by D. M'DONALD, Crown-Court, Princes-street, Soho.
And sold by all other Booksellers in the United Kingdoms.

PRICE SIX-PENCE.



THE
LIFE OF ROBERT NIXON,
COMMONLY CALLED
The Cheshire Prophet.

THE PROPHECY of NIXON has so often given a name to the productions of authors of different principles, that it is now almost become a doubt whether such a person ever existed. Passing through Cheshire lately, curiosity led me to enquire what credit these legends bore amongst the natives ; and I was not a little surprised to find with what confidence they related events which have come to pass within the memory of many of the inhabitants ; and how strictly they adhered to the notion, that he would not fail in the rest. Amongst this number was a namesake and descendant of the same family with this famous idiot, who, at this time, lives not far from Vale-Royal, from whom I had mostly what follows, which he said he had often heard his father and other ancient people in the country relate. I also obtained a manuscript copy, which seemed to bear the appearance of antiquity. — Mr. Gerrard, Mr. Grimes, and many others of the inhabitants of the forest of Delamere, very obligingly told me what they knew, and confirmed what was past.

JOHN OR JONATHAN NIXON, the father of our prophet, was an husbandman, who held the lease of a farm from the abbey of Vale-Royal, to this day known by the name of Bark or Bridge-house, in the Parish of Over near New-Church, and not far from Vale-Royal, on the forest of Delamere, which house is still kept up and venerated by the natives of Cheshire, for nothing else, that I could hear of, but this extraordinary person's birth, which took place on Whitsuntide, and he was christened by the name of Robert, in the year 1467, about the 7th year of Edward IV.; and from his infancy he was remarkable for a stupidity and invincible ignorance, so that it was with great difficulty his parents could instruct him to drive the team, tend the cattle, and such sort of rustic employments.

His parents, at their decease, left the farm and our Robert very young, to the care of an elder brother, with whom he first gave an instance of that fore-knowledge, which renders his name so famous.

As he was driving the team one day, whilst his brother's man guided the plough, he pricked an ox so very cruelly with his goad, that the plough-holder threatened to acquaint his master; on which Nixon said, the ox should not be his brother's three days hence;—which accordingly happened, for a life dropping in the estate, the lord of the manor took the same ox for an heriot.*

During his residence here, he was chiefly distinguished for his simplicity, seldom spoke, and when he did, it was with so rough a voice that it was painful to hear him; he was remarkably satirical, and what he said had generally some prophetic meaning. It was about this time, that the monk of Vale-Royal, having displeased him, he said, in angry tone,

When you the Harrow come on high,
Soon a raven's nest will be;

* Or an acknowledgment, which by the tenure of some estates, is given to every new lord of a manor.

which is well known to have come to pass in the person of the last abbot of that place, whose name was Harrow. Being called before Sir Thomas Holcroft, he was put to death for denying the supremacy of King Henry VIII. Having suppressed the abbey, the King gave the domain to this knight and his heirs, who bore a raven for their crest.

At another time he told them that Norton and Vale-Royal abbies should meet on Acton-bridge, a thing at that time looked upon as improbable; yet those two abbies being pulled down, the stones were used for the purpose of repairing the bridge; and, what was more improbable still, a small thorn, growing in the abbey-yard, would become its door. We may easily guess, no one thought this last would ever come to pass, and especially as it was understood by every one, at that time of day, that thorns never grew so large; but this shews the uncertain meaning of a prophecy, and that what we understand one way, is possibly meant quite different; so it happened in this case, for, at the Reformation, the savage ravagers, under the sanction of religion, sought nothing but rapine and plunder to enrich themselves, and under the name of banishing superstition and pulling down idolatry, spared not even the most revered lineaments of antiquity, the most sacred piles, the most noble structures, or most valuable records, books written by our most venerable forefathers and heroic ancestors. Pieces of the nicest paint, and figures of the best workmanship, being all lost, irrecoverably lost, in one common fit of destructive zeal, which every hue and cry is too apt to raise in the breast of a hot-headed bigot; whilst the truly religious honest, and learned men regret, to this day, the loss of those destructive times has occasioned. Whilst these reached Vale-Royal, this thorn, amongst the rest, being cut-down, was cast in the door-way, to prevent sheep, which grazed in the court, from going in.

But the next morning, when the king's men came to the door, they found it open.

A time shall come when priests and monks
 Shall have no churches nor houses,
 And places where images stood,
 Lined letters shall be good,
 English books through churches are spread,
 There shall be no holy bread.

It is not my intention to recite every particular he is said to have foretold, which regard either private families or past occasions—however, it may not be amiss to mention what is fresh in every one's memory, who lives near Delamere forest, and was vouched to me by several of the oldest inhabitants:

Through Weaver-hall shall be a lone, *
 Ridley-pool shall be sown and mown,
 And Darnel-park shall be hacked and hewn.

The two wings of Weaver hall are now standing, and between them is a cart road; Ridley-pool is filled up, and made good meadow land; and in Darnel-park the trees are cut down, and it is made into pasture ground.

I was also assured, that he foretold the use of broad wheels, &c. and that the town of Norwich, now a considerable place of trade for salt, will be destroyed by water, which is expected to come to pass, by the natives of Cheshire, as much as any other part of his prophecy has done; and some urge, that the navigable cuts lately made is the water meant; but whether a prejudice against those useful improvements may not have given rise to this notion, time only can determine.

But what rendered Nixon the most noticed was, that at the time when the battle of Bosworth field was fought between King Richard the Third and King Henry the Seventh, he stopped his team on a sudden, and pointing with his whip from one hand to the other,

* The term used in this country for a lane.

cried, "Now Richard! Now Harry!" several times; till at last, he said, "Now Harry, get over that ditch, and you gain the day." The ploughholder, amazed, related what had passed when he came home, and the truth of the prediction was verified by special messengers, sent to announce the proclamation of King Henry of England on the field of battle.

The messenger, who went this circuit, related on his return, the prediction of Nixon, concerning the King's success; which, though it had been confirmed by his arrival, had made it no news to the natives of those parts; but Henry, perhaps the wisest prince of his time, not willing to be deceived, nor yet doubting the dispensations of Providence, though by the mouth of a fool, sent the same messenger back to find Nixon, and to bring him before him. At the moment the King gave his orders, our prophet was in the town of Over, about which he ran like a madman, declaring the King had sent for him, and that he must go to court, and there be *clammed*; that is, be starved to death. Such a declaration occasioned a great deal of laughing in the town, to think that his Majesty, so noted for his wisdom, should send for a dirty drivelling clown to court, and that, being sent for, he should fear to be starved there. But how great was their surprise, in a few days after, when the messenger, passing through the town, demanded a guide to find Nixon, who (then turning the spit at his brother's, at the Bark-house) cried, "He is coming, he is now on the road for me;" but the astonishment of the family can scarcely be imagined, when, on the messenger's arrival, he demanded Nixon in the King's name. The people, who before scoffed at his simple appearance and odd sayings, and had pointed to their very children to make him their sport, were now confounded, on finding the most ridiculous of all he ever foretold (in their opinion) become a truth, which was vouched to their own eyes. Whilst hurried through the

country, Nixon still loudly lamented, that he was going to be starved at court.

He had no sooner arrived there, than the cautious King, willing to make trial of his foreknowledge, devised the following scheme to prove it. Having hid a valuable diamond ring, which he commonly wore, after the most seemingly strict enquiry, made through the palace, whether any one had seen it, he sent for Nixon, telling him what a loss he had sustained, and that, if he could not help him to find it, he had no hopes left. But how much surprised was the King, when he got for an answer that old proverb,

He who hideth can find :

On which he declared with a smile, that he had done this only to try the prophet; but ever after ordered that what he said should be carefully put in writing.

To prevent Nixon's being starved, his Majesty gave orders for him to have the liberty to range through the whole palace, and the kitchen was to be his more constant dwelling. Besides which, an officer was appointed to take care that he was neither misused or affronted by the servants, nor at a loss for any necessary of life. Thus situated, one would have thought want could never have reached him; yet, one day, as the King was going out to his hunting-seat, Nixon ran to him crying, and begged, in the most moving terms, that he might not be left, for that if he was, his Majesty would never see him again alive; that he should be starved; that now was the time, and if he was left he must die.

The King, whose thoughts were doubtless fixed on the diversion he was going to, and supposing the matter so very unlikely to come to pass, only said that it was impossible, and recommended him strongly to the officer's care; but scarcely was the King gone from the palace-door, when the servants

mocked and teased Nixon to such a degree, that the officer, to prevent these insults, locked him up in a closet, and suffered no one but himself to attend on him, thinking that he should prevent this part of his prophecy from coming true. But a message of great importance coming from the King to this very officer, he, in his readiness to obey the royal command, forgot to set poor Nixon at liberty, and though he was but three days absent, when he recollected his prisoner, he found him at his return dead, as he had foretold, of hunger.

Thus evidenced, with what is past, stands his prophecy in every mouth in *Cheshire*; yet a greater affront cannot be given than to ask a copy from the families said to be possessed of it. Every possible means, it is well known, has been used to smother the truth, perplex the curious, and even to abolish the very remembrance that such a one ever existed, but from what reason cannot appear, except that it is foretold that the heir of O— is to meet with some ignominious death, at his own gate,* with other family events, which though no person or time being perfectly distinguished, may perhaps occasion this secrecy.

I must also observe, that the cross on Delamere forest, that is, three steps and the socket in which the cross formerly stood, are now sunk within a few inches of the ground, though all remember to have seen it, within the memory of man, nearly six feet above, the cross itself having been destroyed long since. It is also remarkable, that Headless cross is mentioned by Merlin de Rymer, and most other English and Scotch prophets, as the last place in England on which it is supposed a decisive action will happen; but as to any fixed period, when the things will come to pass, I cannot learn, being all mentioned with the greatest uncertainty.

* A few years ago, (since the above was written) Mr E —, of O —, was killed by a fall from his horse, at his own gate as he was returning from hunting.

The original Predictions

OF

ROBERT NIXON,

As delivered by himself.

WHEN a raven shall build in a stone lion's mouth,
On a church top beside the grey forest,
Then shall a King of England be drove from his
crown,
And return no more.

When an eagle shall sit on the top of Vale-Royal
house,
Then shall an heir be born, who shall live to see great
troubles in England.

There shall be a miller named Peter,
With two heels on one foot,
Who shall distinguish himself bravely,
And shall be knighted by the victor :
For foreign nations shall invade England ;
But the invader shall be killed,
And laid across a horse's back,
And led in triumph.

A boy shall be born with three thumbs on one hand,
Who shall hold three Kings' horses,
Whilst England is three times won and lost in one day.

But after this shall be happy days,
A new set of people of virtuous manners shall live
in peace.

But the wall of Vale-royal near the pond shall be the
token of its truth,

For it shall fall:

If it fall downwards,

Then shall the church be sunk for ever:

But if it fall upwards against a hill,

Then shall the church and honest men live still.

Under this wall shall be found the bones of a British
King.

Beckforton mill shall be removed to Ludington-hill,
and three days blood shall turn Nogenshire mill.

But beware of a chance to the lord of Oulton,
Lest he should be hanged at his own door.

A crow shall sit on the top of Headless cross,
In the forest so grey,
and drink of the nobles gentle blood so free,
Twenty hundred horses shall want masters,
Till their girths rot under their bellies.

Thro' our own money and our own men,
Shall a dreadful war begin;
Between the fickle and the suck,
All England shall have a pluck;
and he several times forsworn,
and put to their wits end,
That it shall not be known whether to reap their corn,
bury their dead, or go to the field to fight.

A great scarcity of bread corn.

Foreign nations shall invade England with snow on their
helmets,
and shall bring plague, famine, and murder, in the
skirts of their garments.

A great tax will be granted but never gathered

Between a rick and two trees,
A famous battle fought shall be.

London street shall run with blood,
And at last shall sink,
So that it shall be fulfilled,
Lincoln was, London is, and York shall be
The finest city of the three.

There will be three gates to London of imprisoned men
for cowfsters.

Then if you have three cows, at the first gate sell one,
and keep thee at home.

At the second gate sell the other two, and keep thee at
home.

At the last gate all shall be done.

When summer and winter shall come,
And peace is made at every man's home,
Then shall be danger of war;
For tho' with peace at night the nation ring,
Men shall rise to war in the morning.

There will be a winter Council, a careful Christmas,
and a bloody Lent.

In those days there shall be hatred and bloodshed,
The father against the son, and the son against his
father,

That one may have a house for lifting the latch of the
door.

Landlords shall stand, with hats in ther hands,
To desire tenants to hold their lands.

Great wars and pressing of soldiers,
But at last clubs and clouted shoes shall carry the day.

It will be good in these days for a man to sell his goods,
and keep close at home.

Then forty pounds in hand
Will be better than forty pounds a year in land.

The cock of the North shall be made to flee,
 And his feathers be plucked for his pride ;
 That he shall almost curse the day that he was born.

One asked Nixon, where he might be safe in those days ?

He answered,

In God's croft, between the rivers Mersey and Dee.

Scotland shall stand more or less,
 Till it has brought England to a piteous case.
 The Scots shall rule England one whole year.

Three years of great wars,

And in all countries great uproars.

The first is terrible, the second worse, but the third un-
 bearable.

Three great battles ;

One at Northumberland-bridge,

One at Cumberland-bridge,

And the other the South side of Trent.

Crows shall drink the blood of many nobles.
 East shall rise against West, and North against South.

Then take this for good,
 Noinshire mill shall run with blood,
 And many shall fly down Wanflow-lane.

A man shall come into England,
 But the son of a King crown'd with thorns
 Shall take from him the victory.

Many nobles shall fight
 But a bastard Duke shall win the day,
 And so without delay,
 Set England in a right way.

A wolf from the East shall right eagerly come,
 On the South side of Sandford, on a grey Monday
 morn,

Where groves shall grow upon a green,
 Beside green grey they shall flee
 Into rocks, and many die.

They shall flee into Salt-Strand,
And twenty thousand, without sword, shall die each man.

The dark dragon over Sudsbrown,
Shall bring with him a royal band :
But their lives shall be forlorn.
His head shall be in Stafford town,
His tail in Ireland.

He boldly shall bring his men, thinking to win re-
nown :

Beside a wall in forest fair he shall be beaten down.

On Hine's heath they shall begin this bloody fight,
And with train'd steed shall hew each others' helmet
bright :

But who shall win that day no one can tell.

A Duke out of Denmark shall him dight,

On a day in England, and make many a lord full low
to light,

And the ladies cry, ' Well away,'

And the black fleet with main and might

Their enemies full boldly there assail.

In Britain's land shall be a knight,

On them shall make a cruel fight,

A bitter boar with main and might

Shall bring a royal rout that day.

There shall die many a worthy knight,

And be driven into the fields green and grey,

They shall lose both field and fight.

The weary eagle shall to an island in the sea retire,

Where leaves and herbs grow fresh and green.

There shall he meet a lady fair,

Who shall say, ' Go help thy friend in battle slain :'

Then by the counsel of that fair,

He eagerly will make to flee

Twenty-six standard of the enemy.

A rampant lion in silver set, in armour fair,

shall help the eagle in that tide,

When many a knight shall die.

The bear that hath been long tied to a stake shall shake
 his chains,
 That every man shall hear, and shall cause much de-
 bate.

The bull and the red rose shall stand in strife,
 That shall turn England to much woe,
 And cause many a man to lose his life.
 In a forest stand oaks three,
 Beside a headless cross.

A well of blood shall run and ree,
 Its cover shall be brass,
 Which shall ne'er appear,
 Till horses' feet have trod it bare:
 Who wins it will declare.

The eagle shall so fight that day,
 That n'er a friend's from him away.
 A hound without delay shall run the chace far and
 near.

The dark dragon shall die in fight.
 A lofty head the bear shall rear,
 The wide wolf so shall light.
 The bridled steed against his enemies will fiercely
 fight.

A fleet shall come out of the North,
 Riding on a horse of trees.
 A white hind beareth he,
 And there wreaths so free,
 That day the eagle shall him slay,
 And on a hill set his banner straightway.
 That lion who's forsaken been and forced to flee,
 Shall hear a woman shrilly say,
 ' Thy friends are killed on yonder hill,'
 Death to many a knight this day.
 With that the lion bears his banner to a hill,
 Within a forest that's so plain,
 Beside a headless cross of stone,
 There shall the eagle die that day,
 And the red lion get renown.

A great battle shall be fought by crowned Kings three;
 One shall die, and a bastard Duke will win the day.
 In Sandyford there lies a stone,
 A crowned King shall lose his head on.

In those dreadful days, five wicked priests' heads shall
 be sold for a penny.

Slaughter shall rage to such a degree,
 And infants left by those that are slain,
 That damsels shall with fear and gloe,
 Cry, 'Mother, mother, here's a man!'

Between seven, eight, and nine,
 In England wonders shall be seen.
 Between nine and thirteen
 All sorrow shall be done.
 Then rise up Richard, son of Richard,
 And bless the happy reign,
 Thrice happy he who sees this time to come,
 When England shall know rest and peace again.

End of the Original Prophecies.

THE FOLLOWING

Predictions of Robert Nixon,

From an Original Copy.

THE famous Clieshire prophet, NIXON, besides his Prophecies relative to the fate of private families, also predicted much of public affairs, which we find literally verified by the sequel.

On the Christmas before he went to court, being among the servants at Mr. Cholmondeley's house, to the surprise of them all, he suddenly started up, and said,

“I must prophecy.” He went on, “If the favourite * of a King shall be slain, the master’s neck shall be cleft in twain. And the men of the North† shall sell precious blood; yea, their own blood. And they shall sacrifice a noble warrior‡ to the idol, and hang up his flesh in the high places. And a storm shall come out of the North, which shall blow down the steeples of the South: and the labourer shall rise above his lord, and the harvest shall in part be trampled down by horses, and the remainder lie waste, to be devoured by birds.

“When *an oak tree* shall be softer than men’s hearts, then look for better times, but they be but beginning.

“The departure of a great man’s § soul shall trouble a river hard by, and overthrow trees, houses, and estates. From that part of the house from whence the mischief came, you must look for the cure. First comes joy, then sorrow. After mirth comes mourning.

“I see men, women, and children, spotted & like beasts, and their nearest and dearest friends affrighted at them. I see towns on fire, and innocent blood shed; but when men and horses walk upon the water, then shall come peace and plenty to the people, but trouble is preparing for Kings: and the *great yellow fruit* * shall come over to this country, and flourish: and I see this tree take deep root, and spread into a thousand branches, which shall afterwards be at strife one with another, because of their

* The Duke of Buckingham (favourite of James, and Charles I. who was beheaded) assassinated by J. Felton.

† The Scots, who sold their King, Charles I. for a large sum of money, to the English rebels.

‡ Suppose the Marquis of Montrose.

§ Suppose Oliver Cromwell, at whose death the greatest storm of wind happened that had been known in England.

§ The plague and fire of London was here plainly foretold.

* The Great Yellow Fruit, suppose the Prince of Orange, King William III.

numbers: and there shall come a wind from the South, and the West, which shall shake the tree. I see multitudes of people running to and fro, and talking in a strange tongue. And there shall be a famine † in the midst of great plenty, and earthquakes and storms shall level and purify the earth."

After these sayings, which every one, with the slightest knowledge of our history, will instantly apply to those events which they so wonderfully foretold, Nixon was silent, and relapsed into his wonted stupidity, from which he did not recover until many weeks after, when he became again inspired, and gave vent to those remarkable predictions, which were collected by Mr. Oldmixon. Those which we have just now related, were taken down from the prophet's mouth by the steward, in pursuance of the orders of Mr. Cholmondeley himself; and the original manuscript is now in the hands of a gentleman in Shropshire.

NIXON'S Cheshire Prophecy at large,

FROM

LADY COWPER'S COPY;

With Historical and Political REMARKS, and
many Instances wherein it has been fulfilled.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS remarkable Prophecy has been carefully revised, corrected, and improved; also some account

* This was said, in the book from whence these Predictions were extracted, to mean oppression of the poor.

given of our author, Robert Nixon, who was but a kind of idiot, and used to be employed in following the plough. He had lived in some farmers' families, and was their drudge and their jest.

At last, Thomas Cholinondeley, of Vale-Royal, Esq. took him into his house, where he lived when he composed this prophecy, which he delivered with as much gravity and solemnity as if he had been an oracle; and it was observed, that though the fool was a driveller, and could not speak common sense when he was uninspired, yet in delivering his prophecies, he spoke plainly and sensible, how truly will be seen in the following pages.

As to the credit of this prophecy, I dare say it is as well attested as any of Nostradamus's or Merlin's, and will come to pass as well as the best of Squire Bickerstaff's: it is plain enough, that great men in all ages, had recourse to prophecy, as well as the vulgar. I would not have all grave persons despise the inspiration of Nixon. The late French King gave audience to an inspired farrier, and rewarded him with a hundred pistoles for his prophetic intelligence; though, by what I can learn, he did not come near our Nixon for gifts.

The simplicity, the circumstances, and the history of the Cheshire Prophecy are so remarkable, that I hope the Public will be as much delighted as I was myself.

By the way, this is not a prophecy of to day; 'tis as old as the powder-plot, and the story will make it appear, that there is as little imposture in it as the Jacobites pretend there is in the person it seems to have an eye to: but whether they are both imposters alike, or not, I leave the reader to determine.

J. OLDMIXON.

THE PROPHECY.

IN the reign of King James the First, there lived a man generally reputed a fool, whose name

was Nixon. One day, when he returned home from ploughing, he laid the things down which he had in his hands, and continuing for some time in a seemingly deep and thoughtful meditation, at length he pronounced, in a loud hoarse voice, "Now I will prophecy;" and spoke as follows:

"When a raven shall build in a stone lion's mouth, on the top of a church in Cheshire, then a King of England shall be driven out of his kingdom, and never return more.

"When an eagle shall sit on the top of the house, then an heir shall be born to the Cholmondeley family; and this heir shall live to see England invaded by foreigners, who shall proceed as far as a town in Cheshire; but a miller, named Peter, shall be born with two heels on one foot, and at that time living in a mill of Mr. Cholmondeley's; he shall be instrumental in delivering the nation.

"The person who then governs the nation will be in great trouble, and skulk about. The invading King shall be killed, laid across a horse's back like a calf, and led in triumph. The miller having been instrumental in it, shall bring forth the person that then governs the kingdom, and be knighted for what he has done; and after that England shall see happy days. A young new set of men, of virtuous manners, shall come, who shall prosper, and make a flourishing church for two hundred years.

"As a token of the truth of all this, a wall of Mr. Cholmondeley's shall fall. If it fall downwards, the church shall be oppressed, and rise no more; but if upwards, next the rising hill on the side of it, then shall it flourish again. Under this wall shall be found the bones of a British King.

"A pond shall run with blood three days, and the Cross stone Pillar in the Forest sink so low into the ground, that a crow from the top of it shall drink of the best blood in England.

"A boy shall be born with three thumbs, and

shall hold three kings' horses, while England shall be three times won and lost in one day.'

The original may be seen in several families in that county, and in particular in the hands of Mr. Egerton, of Oulton, with many other remarkables; as, that Peckforton windmill should be removed to Ludington hill, and that horses saddled should run about till their girths rotted away. But this is sufficient to prove Nixon as great a prophet as Partridge: and we shall give other proofs of it before we have done with him.

I know your prophets are generally for Raw-head and Bloody-bones, and therefore do not mind it much; or I might add, that Oulton mill shall be driven with blood instead of water; but these sooth sayers are great butchers, and every hall as with them a slaughter house.

Now as for authorities to prove this prophecy to be genuine, and how it has hitherto been accomplished, I might refer myself to the whole county of Chester, where it is in every one's mouth, and has been to these forty years. As much as I have of the manuscript was sent me by a person of sense and veracity, and as little partial to visions as any body. For my own part, I build nothing on this or any other prophecy; only there is something so very odd in the story, and so pat in the wording of it, that I cannot help giving it as I found it.

The family of the Cholmondeleys is very ancient in this county, and takes its name from a place so called, near Nantwich; there are also Cholmton and Cholmondeston; but the seat of that branch of the family, which kept our prophet Nixon, is at Vale-Royal, on the river Weave, in De'amere forest. It was formerly an abbey, * founded by Edward I. and came to the

* It is reported, that there is a room in this house, the door and windows of which are kept closely fastened, and no one is ever

Cholmondeleys from the famous family of the Holcrofts. When Nixon prophesied, this family was near being extinct, the heir having married Sir Walter St. John's daughter, a lady not esteemed very young, who, notwithstanding, being with child, fell in labour, and continued so for many days: during which time, an eagle sat upon the house-top, and flew away when she was delivered of a son.

A raven is also known to have built in a stone lion's mouth in the steeple of the church of Over, in the forest of Delamere. Not long before the abdication of King James, the wall spoken of fell down, and fell upwards: and in removing the rubbish, were found the bones of a man more than ordinary size. A pond at the same time ran with water that had a reddish tincture, and was never known to have done so before or since.

Headless cross, in the forest, which in the memory of man was several feet high, is now only half a foot from the grounds.

In the parish of Budworth, a boy was born, about eighteen years ago, with three thumbs; the youth is still living there; and the miller Peter lives in Nogen-shire mill, in expectation of fulfilling this prophecy on the person of Perkin: he hath also two heels on one foot, and I find he intends to make use of them in the interest of King George, for he is a bold Briton, and a loyal subject, zealous for the Protestant succession in the illustrious house of Hanover, has a vote for the knights of the shire, and never fails to give it on the right side: in a word, Peter will prate or box for the good cause that Nixon had listed him in, and if he does not do the business, this must be said of him, that no man will bid fairer for it; which the Lady Egerton was so apprehensive of, that wishing well to another restoration, she often instigated her husband to turn

permitted to enter the same, except the next heir, when he attains his twenty-first year, at which time he goes in alone, and when he returns, it is shut up as before.

him out of the mill ; but he looked upoh it as whimsical, and so Peter still continues there, in hopes of being as good a knight as Sir Philip his landlord was.

Of this Peter, I have been told, that the Lady Narcliff, of Chelsea, and the Lady St. John, of Battersea, together with several other persons of credit and fashion, have often been heard to talk, and that they all asserted their knowledge of the truth of our prophecy and its accomplishment, with many particulars that are more extraordinary than any I have yet mentioned.

The noise of Nixon's Predictions reaching the ears of King James the First, he would needs see this fool, who cried and made ado that he might not go to court, and the reason that he gave was, that he should there be starved.—(A very whimsical fancy of his, Courts not being places where people are used to starve in, when they once come there, whatever they may have done before.)—The King being informed of Nixon's refusing to come, said he would take particular care that he should not be starved, and ordered him to be brought up. Nixon cried out, that he was sent for again ; and soon after the messenger arrived, who brought him up from Cheshire.

How or whether he prophecied to his Majesty, no person can tell : but he is not the first fool that has made a good court prophet.

That Nixon might be well provided for, it was ordered that he should be kept in the kitchen, where he grew so troublesome in licking and picking the meat, that the cooks locked him up in a hole ; and the King going on a sudden from Hampton Court to London, in their hurry they forgot the fool, and he was really starved to death.

There are great many passages of this fool-prophet's life and sayings transmitted in tradition from father to son in this county palatine ; as, that when he lived with a farmer, before he was taken into Mr. Cholmondeley's family, he goaded an ox so cruelly that one of the ploughmen threatened to beat him for abusing his

Master's beast—Nixon said, "My master's beast will not be his three days." A life in an estate dropping in that time, the lord of the manor took the same ox for an heriot. This account, whimsical and romantic as it is, was told to the Lady Cowper, in the year 1670, by Dr. Patrick, late Bishop of Ely, then chaplain to Sir Walter St. John; and that lady had the following farther particulars, relating to this prophecy, and the fulfilling of many parts of it, from Mrs. Chute, sister to Mrs. Cholmondeley of Vale-Royal, who affirmed, that a multitude of people gathered together to see the eagle before mentioned, and the bird was frightened from her young; that she herself was one of them; and the cry among the people was, Nixon's prophecy is fulfilled, and we shall have a foreign King. She declared, that she read over the prophecy many times, when her sister was with child of the heir who now enjoys the estate. She particularly remembers that King James the Second was plainly pointed at, and that it was foretold that he should endeavour to subvert the laws and religion of this kingdom, for which reason they would rise and turn him out; that the eagle of which Nixon prophesied perched in one of the windows all the time her sister was in labour. She said it was the biggest bird she ever saw; that it was in a deep snow; and it perched on the edge of a great bow window, which had a large border on the outside, and that she and many others opened the window to try to scare it away, but it would not stir until Mrs. Cholmondeley was delivered; after which it took flight to a great tree over against the room her sister lay in, where having staid about three days, it flew away in the night. She affirmed further to the Lady Cowper, that the falling of the garden wall was a thing not to be questioned, it being in so many peoples' memory. That it was foretold that the heir of Vale-Royal should live to see England invaded by foreigners, and that he should fight bravely for his King and Country: That the miller mentioned is now alive, and expects to be

knighted, and is in the very mill that is foretold : That he should kill two invaders who should come in, the one from the West and the other from the North : That he from the North should bring with him of all nations, Swedes, Danes, Germans, and Dutch ; and that in the folds of his garments he should bring fire and famine, plague and murder : That many great battles should be fought in England, one upon London-bridge, which should be so bloody, that people will ride in London-streets up to their horses' bellies in blood ; that several other battles should be fought up and down most parts of Cheshire ; and that the last that ever would be fought in England should be on Delamere forest : That the heir of Oulton, whose name is E——n, and has married Earl Cholmondeley's sister, should be hanged up at his own gate.

Lastly, Nixon foretels great glory and prosperity to those who stand up in defence of their laws and liberties ; and ruin and misery to those who should betray them. He says, the year before this would happen, bread-corn would be very dear, and that the year following more troubles should begin, which would last three years ; that the first would be moderate, the second bloody, and the third intolerable ; that unless they were shortened no mortal could bear them ; and that there were no mischiefs but what poor England would feel at that time. But that GEORGE the SON of GEORGE* should put an end to all. That afterwards the church should flourish, and England be the most glorious nation upon earth.

Lady Cowper was not content to take these particulars from Mrs. Chute, but she enquired of Sir Thomas Aston, of the truth of this prophecy, and he attested it was in great reputation in Cheshire, and that the facts were known by every one to have happened as Nixon said they would ; adding, that the morning

* The original prophecy says, " Richard the son of Richard."

before the garden wall fell, his neighbour, Mr. Cholmondeley, going to ride out a hunting, said, "Nixon seldom fails, but now I think he will; for he foretold that this day my garden-wall would fall, and I think it looks as if it would stand these forty years:" That he had not been gone above a quarter of an hour before the wall split, and fell upwards against the rising of the hill, which, as Nixon would have it, was the presage of a flourishing church.

As to the removal of Peckforton mill, it was done by Sir John Crew, the mill having lost its trade there, for which he ordered it to be set upon Ludditon hill: and being asked if he did it to fulfil the prophecy, he declared he never thought of it. I myself have enquired of a person who knows Mr. Cholmondeley's pond as well as Rosamond's in St. James's Park, and he assured me, the falling of the wall, and the pond running blood, (as they call it,) are facts which, in Cheshire, any one would be reckoned mad for making the least question of them. As there are several particulars in this prophecy which remain unfulfilled; so when they come to pass, some other circumstances may be added, which are not convenient to be told until accomplished.

If I had a mind to look into the antiquities of this county, I might find that prodigies and prophecies are no unusual things there. Camden tells us, that at Brereton; not many miles from Vale-Royal, which gave name to a famous, ancient, numerous, and knightly family, there is a thing as strange as the perching of the eagle, or the falling of the wall, which he says was attested to him by many persons, and was commonly believed; that before any heir of this family dies, there are seen, in a lake adjoining, the bodies of trees swimming upon the water for several days together. He likewise adds, that near the abbey of St. Maurice, in Burgundy, there is a fishpond, in which a number of fish are put, equal to the number of monks of that place; and if any one of them happens to be

sick, there is a fish seen floating on the surface of the water; and in case the fit of sickness proves fatal to the monk, the fish foretels it by its death some days before. This the learned Camden relates in his description of Cheshire, and the opinion of the trees swimming in the lake near Brereton, prevails all about the county to the present day, only with this difference, that some say it is one log only that swims, and some say many.

Lancashire, which is not far off, has been famous for witches, and I am afraid Cheshire is a little infected by its neighbourhood. Those that will not believe our prophecy may leave it alone; but if hope is a good help to faith, I shall not be long among the incredulous.

The Editor presents his Readers with a Copy of a printed Paper, which several aged Persons, residing near the Forest, have vouched for the Authenticity of it.

A true and particular Account of a strange and surprising VISION, that was seen on the Forest of Delamere, in Cheshire, on the 4th of last Month.

AS NIXON, in the reign of King James the First, prophesied of many strange and wonderful things that should come to pass, such as an heir being born to Lord Cholmondeley's family, which at that time there was little reason to expect, but which came to pass; and that the eldest son, of young Lord Cho'mondeley, should have the misfortune to break his neck, by riding a hunting, which accident really did happen; and several other things already come to pass, according to the said prophecy: but, in particular, of a wonderful battle or engagement that should be fought on the

Forest of Delamere; and as it is now fully expected that we shall have an invasion from our natural and inveterate enemies, the French, it is also thought it will be in the North of England, and in all probability the said Forest of Delamere may be the place of action or engagement: and what strengthens the belief more is, the vision that was seen on the said Forest on the 4th, as follows:

As two ancient persons were walking over the said Forest, to their great surprise, they saw, at a distance before them, an army rise out of the ground, drawn up, with their proper officers, and their commanders in front of them, and whilst they were looking at, and ruminating upon so strange a sight, behold, to their most wonderful surprise and amazement, there arose also another army out of the ground, at a small distance from the first, and farther in the forest, which army was headed or commanded by a man in royal apparel, who, after having drawn up his army, marched to meet and engage the first; upon which a most bloody battle ensued with fire arms, and many appeared to be killed on both sides; but, being so near each other they laid down or grounded their arms, and took to their swords, with which great slaughter was made; and then came to such close quarrels, that they put up their swords and fought with their hands; all of which engagements more than three quarters of an hour, during which time the said two ancient people were spectators; and, at last, the remains of the army that first appeared retreated towards the sea, and vanquished directly out of their sight; whilst the other army, which was commanded by the man in royal apparel, marched victorious out of the field, as far as it was possible to see them. These ancient people having spoke of the above vision, it came to the ears of several gentlemen, who sent for and examined them concerning the truth of it, which they were ready to make oath for their satisfaction.

On the 6th of the same month, as seven men were

going to Chester, over the said Forest, about the middle of it, they saw, to their great astonishment, a vision, much resembling that which was seen on the 4th, as above described; only with this addition, that the victorious army had many slain, to all appearance, yet they resumed life again, and joined their own army; all which is looked upon as a good omen, that if in case England is invaded by her enemies, though the nation be seemingly dead, and in great division, yet, on the approach of the enemy, they will all, in one general heart, and one mind, exert themselves to repel our most inveterate enemies.

As Nixon's Prophecies are by some persons thought fables, yet, by what has come to pass, it is now thought, and very plainly appears, that most of them have or will prove true; for which reason, we have all occasion not only to exert our utmost might, to repel by force our enemies, but to return from our abandoned and wicked course of life, and make our continual prayers to God for protection and safety.

A COPY OF A
Collection of Prophecies,

Delivered to the Abbot of Beverley,
BY MOTHER URSELA SHIPTON;

Which hath been preserved in Manuscript in a noble Family
 these many Years, and lately discovered among other
 curious and valuable Papers.

The Prophecies are as follow :

ABOUT the Time that one shall be
 Joined unto two times three,
 And four times ten with four times two,*
 Amongst us shall be great ado.
 An eagle's head that time shall fall 5
 And scatter sore his yonng ones all.
 Then shall a cypher swell full great,
 His name a hundred takes the seat,
 And shall do mighty things before
 He is removed off the shore; 10
 But ten times five with two and six,†
 Him in another world shall fix.
 And quickly after you shall spy
 The eagle back again to fly.
 He shall bedeck himself again 15
 With feathers on his father's train,
 'Till heavy times shall make men say,
 Full oft, Alack! and, Well-a-day!
 And after all a cloud shall come,
 And almost darken quite the sun, 20
 And in that time actions shall be
 Chiefly driven on by three;
 The cross, the surplice, and the crown,
 Strive who shall put each other down;
 Great treachery and bloodshed then 25
 Shall sweep away great store of men;

* 1648.

† 1658.

The Lion and blue flowers shall seek
 Quite to destroy the heretic sheep.
 And when the cow shall ride the bull,
 Then motly priest beware thy skull. 30
 For a sweet pious prince make room,
 And for the kirk prepare a broom.
 Alecto next shall seize the crown,
 And streams of blood run Smithfield down.
 A Maiden Queen full many a year, 35
 Shall England's warlike sceptre bear.
 The western monarch's wooden horses
 Shall be destroy'd by a Drake's forces.
 The northern lion, over Tweed,
 The Maiden Queen shall next succeed. 40
 And join in one two mighty states,
 And then shall Janus shut his gates.
 Now England soon is hard bested,
 Before the mitre's head be rid.
 False Ireland contrives our woe, 45
 But zealous Scotland doth not so.
 Rough Mars shall rage as he were wood,
 And earth shall darkened be with blood.
 Then will be sacrificed, C.
 And not a King in England be. 50
 But death shall snatch the wolf away,
 Confusion shall give up its sway;
 And fate to England shall restore
 A king to reign as heretofore.
 Triumphant death rides London thro'; 55
 And men on tops of houses go.
 J. R. shall into saddle slide,
 And furiously to Rome shall ride.
 The Pope shall have a fatal fall,
 And never more distress Whitehall. 60
 A Queen shall knit both North and South,
 And take away the 'Luce's tooth.
 A Lion-Duce shall after reign.
 And of the Whiskers clear the main;
 But he that chanceth to survive, 65
 Shall see Old England mainly thrive.
 England's wonder, which ne'er hath been,
 Three Queens in England shall be seen.

Two Dukes shall for the crown contend,
 And bring the M ——— y to end. 70
 Bishops shall fall into contempt and scorn,
 And gospel-anglers shall the kirk adorn.
 If any ask, how these things come to pass;
 'The fox shall ride the goose, the goose the ass.

The greatest part of what has been hitherto published under the title of Mother Shipton's Prophecies, plainly appears to be no more than imperfect bits and scraps of this collection, carried away, perhaps, in the memory of such as might sometime have the opportunity of seeing it in the noble family where it was lodged. The whole seems entirely to point at the great events that have, and yet may happen to both church and state, in this and the neighbouring nations. The first thirty verses seem to relate to the disasters that should befall a great part of Europe, during the time of King Henry VIII. for the twenty-ninth and thirtieth verses terminate in his reign, and are the last wherein the reign can be understood to be hinted at.

EXPLANATIONS OF THE PROPHECIES.

V. 29. And when the Cow shall ride the Bull.

This seems to have been fulfilled when Henry VIII. married Lady Anna Bullen; for he, as Duke of Richmond, placed the cow in his arms, and the crest of her family was a black bull's head.

V. 30. Then motley priest beware thy skull.

Presently after the King's marriage, the seizure of abbey lands, &c. and the dissolution of monasteries ensued, whereby the skull, or head-piece of the priesthood (i. e. gain) was miserably broke.

V. 31. For a sweet pious prince make room.

By this, doubtless, is meant King Edward VI, a part of whose character is thus given by the learned Dean Echard, in his History of England:

"He was truly just and merciful in his disposition, and took special care of the petitions that were given him by the poor and oppressed; but his zeal for religion crowned all the rest, which did not proceed from angry heat, but from a real tenderness of conscience, founded on the love of God, and his fellow creatures."

V. 32. And for the kirk * prepare a broom.

This alludes to the beginning of the Reformation, when many superstitions were swept out of the church.

V. 33. Alecto next shall seize the crown.

Alecto was one of the fabulous furies of the heathen, whose employment was to kindle war, and distress mankind. She is here placed for Queen Mary I. in whose reign, as it is alluded to in the thirty-fourth verse, the blood of the Protestant martyrs was plentifully shed in Smithfield.

Verse 35 and 36.

A Maiden Queen, full many a year,
Shall England's warlike sceptre bear.

By these are meant Queen Elizabeth, who reigned 44 years, 4 months, and 6 days; upon whom Andrew Marvel has left the following verses:

"The other day, fam'd Spencer I did bring
In lofty notes Tudor's bless'd race to sing;
How Spain's proud pow'rs her virgin arms controll'd,
And golden days in peaceful order roll'd;
How, like ripe fruit, she dropp'd from off her throne,
Full of grey hairs, good deeds, and great renown."

Verse 37 and 38.

The Western Monarch's wooden horses
Shall be destroyed by a Drake's forces.

The Western Monarch is supposed to mean the King of Spain, whose country lies on the west side of the continent; and his wooden horses his fleet of ships, or armada, vanquished by Admiral Drake, and the rest of the Queen's forces, in the year 1588.

* A North country word for church.

Verse 39 and 40.

The Northern Lion, over Tweed,
The Maiden Queen shall next succeed.

The Northern Lion; (i. e.) King James I. born in Scotland, called a Lion, not in consideration of any great heroisms he should perform, but because the Lion is the principal figure in the British arms; whence the King, as the principal person in the realm, metaphorically takes the name.

Verse 41 and 42.

And join, in one, two mighty states,
And then shall Janus shut his gates.

The first bears an allusion to the uniting of the two crowns of England and Scotland in one, in the person of King James. And the second, points out the peaceful reign of that monarch, by shutting the gates of Janus, who was one of the heathen gods, and the gates of whose temple were never shut but in time of peace.

Verse 43 and 44 seem to hint at some great calamities that should befall this nation before the deposition of episcopacy, in the reign of the republican anarchy, under Q. Cromwell.

Verse 45 and 46.

False Ireland contrives our woe,
But zealous Scotland doth not so.

Doubtless these intended the execrable massacre in Ireland, in the reign of King Charles I. and the loyalty of the Scotch in not joining the Irish rebels, but suffering with the English.

Verse 47, 48, 49, and 50.

Rough Mars shall rage as he were wood,*
And earth shall dark'ned be with blood;
Then will be sacrificed, C.
And not a king in England be.

This was verified in the time of the grand rebellion, and unnatural civil war, when the nation was torn and pillaged, the laws broke, the constitution overturned, and the King and monarchy slain together.

Verse 51, 52, 53, and 54.

But death shall snatch the wolf away;
Confusion shall give up the sway;
And fate to England shall restore
A King, to reign as heretofore.

If we guess aright, the first of these verses alludes to the death of O. Cromwell; and the other three to the restoration of King Charles II.

Verse 55 and 56.

Triumphant death rides London thro',
And men on tops of houses go.

The first, in all appearance, points out the terrible Plague that raged in London, 1665. The second circumstantially alludes to the dreadful fire in the year following: signifying that people should be obliged to run from one house to another, over the tops of the houses, to save themselves, and their effects.

V. 57. J. R. shall into a saddle slide.

J. R. (i. e.) James Rex, or King James II. who ascended the throne upon the death of King Charles II.

V. 58. And furiously to Rome shall ride.

Scarce was he settled upon the throne, before he went to mass publicly; and, by pursuing imprudent and illegal measures, was the cause of the verification of,

Verse 59 and 60.

The Pope shall have a fatal fall,
And never more distress Whitehall.

For he was abdicated for his mis-government; and his son-in-law King William and Queen Mary II. were placed upon the throne.

V. 61. A Queen shall knit both North and South.

This seems to refer to the union of England and Scotland, in the reign of Queen Anne.

V. 62, And take away the 'Luce's tooth.

This likewise seems to relate to her extraordinary victories over Louis XIV. King of France, who we judge to be intended here by the 'luce, which, by way of ellipsis might here be put for flower-de-luce, the arms of that monarchy.

Verse 63 and 64.

A Lion-duce shall after reign,
And of the Whiskers clear the main.

What is meant by the Lion-duce may be matter of amusement to the curious; but as the word duce sometimes represents the number two, so two in this ambiguous kind of phrase may intend the similar word second, and our present gracious sovereign * being the second lion (or English monarch) of his name, it is far from being unlikely that he may be the prince here pointed out, who shall clear the main of the Whiskers, which is a northern term for Mustachioes, and doubtless alludes here to the Spanish, whose fashion it has been, for many centuries past, to wear them. But as this appears to relate to the present age, we leave it to the skilful and ingenious; as we likewise do the following verses, which seem to predict something further below than the reach of the present age,

Whether the prophecy of the lily be Mother Shipton's or no we cannot certainly determine, but as it has been attributed to her, and is writ in a peculiar sublimity of sense and style, we think it would be very improper to omit it. It runs as follows:

“The Lily shall remain in a merry world; and he shall be moved against the seed of the lion; and he shall stand on one side of the country with a number of ships. Then shall come the son of man, having a fierce beast in his arms, whose kingdom is the land of the moon, which is dreaded throughout the whole world. With a number of people shall he pass many waters, and shall come to the land of the lion, looking for help of the beast of his country; and an eagle shall come out of the east, spread with the beams of the son of man, and shall destroy castles of the Thames. and there shall be battles among many kingdoms. That year shall be the bloody field, and Lily, F. K. shall lose his crown, and therewith shall be crowned the son of man, K. W. and the fourth year shall be many battles for the faith, and the son of man, with the eagles, shall be preferred. And there shall be an universal peace over the whole world, and there shall be plenty of fruits, and then shall he go to the land of the cross.”

* King George the Second.







